# Travellers’ e-bike charger plan in New Forest sparks fears of disguised settlement



A group of travellers are vying for council planning permission to establish a new settlement in Burley, deep within the picturesque New Forest, by proposing the installation of electric bike chargers. Their planning application has ignited considerable controversy among local residents, who perceive it as an attempt to present an eco-friendly facade in order to bypass strict planning requirements for the area.

Michael Chalk and Tom Butler, the travellers behind the application, have been accused of incorporating what critics label “token sustainability features” to legitimise their proposal for two static caravans and associated infrastructure, which includes e-bike charging points and cycle storage. Local residents argue that these additions are little more than superficial gestures that fail to address the broader environmental impact of establishing permanent housing in a historically rural setting.

The New Forest, known for its ancient woodlands and unique natural beauty, is a designated National Park with protective measures in place to maintain its character. More than 70 residents have objected to the proposal, expressing concern over its “urbanising nature” and lamenting the loss of the naturally scenic landscape that had previously characterised the paddocks. One local resident, Philip Mosley, voiced his disapproval, stating that “token sustainability features” do not adequately counterbalance the negative consequences of increased traffic, waste generation, and permanent housing.

The application has prompted reflections on the balance between environmental sustainability and the preservation of rural character. Critics point to similar cases in the region, such as a recent council rejection of plans for electric vehicle charging stations at Totton Retail Park due to concerns over visual impact and landscaping. This precedent underscores the caution local authorities are taking in balancing modern conveniences with environmental stewardship—something community members feel is being overlooked in the travellers' proposal.

Further scepticism has arisen from the reception of the site, which has notably changed since the installation of the static caravans and the proposed structures. Neighbours Andrew and Rachel Holloway shared that the area has been “urbanised,” detracting from the “natural beauty” that once defined the site, with Rachel lamenting that the landscape enhancements proposed are hardly conducive to the region’s charm. They asserted that the development harms the surrounding character rather than enhances it, directly contradicting any claims of sustainable integration.

Critics like Dr A Lawrence and Dr C Walter describe the planning application as “mischievous,” arguing it attempts to legitimise a transition from rural land to a residential environment and sets a precedent that could undermine the unique attributes of the New Forest. They contend that the proposal does not adhere to a vision of sustainable planning that is contextually appropriate. Instead, the intentions behind the planners' application appear to serve a more residential agenda under the guise of eco-friendly initiatives.

Local sentiment further falls into question as the travellers have been reported to display confrontational signage at the site entrance, which includes warnings of “reactive guard dogs.” This only adds to the perception of a community not genuinely willing to integrate with the local populace, contrasting sharply with their claims of wanting to participate in village life.

As the New Forest Park Authority prepares to review the plans, the outcome will not only reflect the immediate concerns of Burley’s residents but also set a significant precedent for future planning applications in this cherished landscape—an intricate dance between modern needs and the preservation of a remarkable natural environment.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760923/Travellers-woo-councill-install-e-bike-chargers-New-Forest.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9394084/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760923/Travellers-woo-councill-install-e-bike-chargers-New-Forest.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/24591204.plans-rapid-electric-vehicle-chargers-totton-rejected/), [[5]](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9413650/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9402494/), [[6]](https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9414377/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760923/Travellers-woo-councill-install-e-bike-chargers-New-Forest.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/24591204.plans-rapid-electric-vehicle-chargers-totton-rejected/> - Plans to install six rapid electric vehicle charging stations at Totton Retail Park were rejected by New Forest District Council due to concerns over their visual impact and potential harm to the area's character. The council cited the loss of landscaped areas and the prominence of the proposed infrastructure as key reasons for the refusal. Despite the government's strategy to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the council determined that the benefits did not outweigh the negative environmental impact. An appeal against the decision was lodged by the applicant, InstaVolt, seeking to overturn the council's refusal.
3. <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9402494/> - The New Forest National Park Authority has received several planning applications, including proposals for outbuildings, extensions, and alterations in areas such as Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, and Burley. Notably, an application in Burley involves the installation of 29 replacement electricity poles along Mill Lane. The authority is reviewing these applications, and decisions will be made in due course. The community is encouraged to stay informed and participate in the planning process by submitting comments or concerns to the relevant authorities.
4. <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9394084/> - Recent planning applications in the New Forest National Park include proposals for extensions, outbuildings, and changes of use in areas such as Ashurst, Beaulieu, and Brockenhurst. In Burley, applications involve single-storey extensions and outbuildings. The New Forest National Park Authority is currently reviewing these applications, and decisions will be communicated in due course. Residents and stakeholders are encouraged to engage with the planning process by submitting their comments or concerns to the appropriate authorities.
5. <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9413650/> - The New Forest National Park Authority has received various planning applications, including proposals for extensions, outbuildings, and alterations in areas such as Ashurst, Brockenhurst, and Burley. Notably, in Burley, applications involve two-storey and single-storey extensions, along with outbuildings and alterations to doors and windows. The authority is reviewing these applications, and decisions will be made in due course. The community is encouraged to stay informed and participate in the planning process by submitting comments or concerns to the relevant authorities.
6. <https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/latest-new-forest-national-park-applications-and-decisions-9414377/> - Recent planning applications in the New Forest National Park include proposals for extensions, outbuildings, and alterations in areas such as Ashurst, Boldre, and Burley. In Burley, applications involve two-storey and single-storey extensions, along with outbuildings and alterations to doors and windows. The New Forest National Park Authority is currently reviewing these applications, and decisions will be communicated in due course. Residents and stakeholders are encouraged to engage with the planning process by submitting their comments or concerns to the appropriate authorities.
7. <https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/24164661.totton-retail-park-electric-vehicle-chargers-come/> - Plans to install six rapid electric vehicle charging stations at Totton Retail Park have been proposed, aiming to expand the EV charging infrastructure in the area. The proposal includes converting existing parking spaces into charging bays, along with the necessary equipment. The New Forest District Council is currently reviewing the application, considering factors such as the impact on the local environment and the benefits of increased EV charging facilities. A decision on the proposal is expected in the near future, and the community is encouraged to stay informed and participate in the planning process.